

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the captioned patent application:

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) A collar according to claim 22, wherein said collar is provided with wedging means for wedging the spacer so that the latter is prevented from rotating relative to the ring.

5. (Previously Presented) A collar according to claim 22, wherein the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed has a lip under which the spacer is engaged, and said lip presents at least one rotation-preventing wedging facet which co-operates with a portion of the periphery of the spacer that is not circular.

6. (Previously Presented) A collar according to claim 22, wherein the ring presents a substantially V-shaped cross-section whose tip projects from an outside periphery of the ring.

7-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to claim 26, wherein the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed presents a lip, and wherein the spacer is formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt, and a join plane between two ends of the blank from which the spacer is formed is engaged under said lip.

11. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to claim 26, wherein the spacer is formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt, said blank being rolled up to form the spacer and presenting a width that varies over a length of said blank.
12. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to claim 11, wherein the blank that is rolled up to form the spacer presents a maximum width in the vicinity of a join plane between two ends of said blank.
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Previously Presented) A collar according to claim 27, wherein the spacer is formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt.
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to claim 26, wherein a cross-section of said spacer is flattened on a side closer to the ring, in the vicinity of the second end edge of said spacer which co-operates with the bearing tab against which said spacer is disposed.
17. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to claim 26, wherein said collar is provided with wedging means for wedging the spacer so that the latter is prevented from rotating relative to the ring.
18. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to claim 26, wherein the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed has a lip under which the spacer is engaged, and said lip presents at least one rotation-preventing wedging facet which cooperates with a portion of the periphery of the spacer that is not circular.

19. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to-claim 26, wherein the ring presents a substantially V-shaped cross-section whose tip projects from an outside periphery of the ring.
20. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to-claim 26, wherein an inside periphery of the spacer defines a channel whose height as measured in a plane in which the bearing tabs come towards each other while the collar is being tightened, is greater than a diameter of the shank of the bolt.
21. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar according to-claim 26, wherein the height of the channel is at least equal to 1.2 times the diameter of the shank of the bolt.
22. (Previously Presented) A clamping collar comprising an open ring, each end of which carries a bearing tab comprising a bore, and tightening means comprising a tightening bolt, a nut, and a spacer, the bolt having a shank that passes through the bores in the bearing tabs and a head situated beside one of the bearing tabs, the nut being situated beside the other bearing tab, and co-operating with the shank of the bolt, at least a first one of the two elements constituted by the head of the bolt and by the nut being suitable for being driven in rotation so as to tighten the bolt, and the spacer being disposed between said first element and the bearing tab beside which said first element is situated and being formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt, wherein the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed further comprises a lip and wherein a join plane disposed between the two ends of the blank from which the spacer is formed is engaged under said lip.

23. (Previously Presented) A clamping collar comprising an open ring, each end of which carries a bearing tab comprising a bore, and tightening means comprising a tightening bolt, a nut, and a spacer, the bolt having a shank that passes through the bores in the bearing tabs and a head situated beside one of the bearing tabs, the nut being situated beside the other bearing tab, and co-operating with the shank of the bolt, at least a first one of the two elements constituted by the head of the bolt and by the nut being suitable for being driven in rotation so as to tighten the bolt, and the spacer being disposed between said first element and the bearing tab beside which said first element is situated and being formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt, wherein a cross-section of said spacer is flattened on a side closer to the ring, in the vicinity of the second end edge of said spacer which co-operates with the bearing tab against which said spacer is disposed.

24. (Currently Amended) A clamping collar comprising an open ring, each end of which carries a bearing tab comprising a bore, and tightening means comprising a tightening bolt, a nut, and a spacer, the bolt having a shank that passes through the bores in the bearing tabs and a head situated beside one of the bearing tabs, the nut being situated beside the other bearing tab, and co-operating with the shank of the bolt, at least a first one of the two elements constituted by the head of the bolt and by the nut being suitable for being driven in rotation so as to tighten the bolt, and the spacer being disposed between said first element and the bearing tab beside which said first element is situated and being formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt, wherein an inside periphery of the spacer defines a channel whose height as measured in a plane in which the bearing tabs come towards each other while the collar is being tightened, is greater than a diameter of the shank of the bolt, and further wherein a cross-section of said spacer is flattened on a side closer to the ring, in the vicinity of the second end edge of said spacer which co-operates with the bearing tab against which said spacer is disposed.

25. (Currently Amended) A clamping collar comprising an open ring, each end of which carries a bearing tab comprising a bore, and tightening means comprising a tightening bolt, a nut, and a spacer, the bolt having a shank that passes through the bores in the bearing tabs and a head situated beside one of the bearing tabs, the nut being situated beside the other bearing tab, and co-operating with the shank of the bolt, at least a first one of the two elements constituted by the head of the bolt and by the nut being suitable for being driven in rotation so as to tighten the bolt, and the spacer being disposed between said first element and the bearing tab beside which said first element is situated and being formed by a rolled-up blank disposed around the shank of the bolt, wherein an inside periphery of the spacer defines a channel whose height as measured in a plane in which the bearing tabs come towards each other while the collar is being tightened, is greater than a diameter of the shank of the bolt, and further wherein the height of the channel is at least equal to 1.2 times the diameter of the shank of the bolt, and further wherein a cross-section of said spacer is flattened on a side closer to the ring, in the vicinity of the second end edge of said spacer which co-operates with the bearing tab against which said spacer is disposed.

26. (Previously Presented) A method for tightening a clamping collar comprising an open ring, each end of which carries a bearing tab provided with a bore, and tightening means comprising a tightening bolt, a nut, and a spacer, the bolt having a shank that passes through the bores in the bearing tabs and a head situated beside one of the bearing tabs, the nut being situated beside the other bearing tab, and co-operating with the shank of the bolt, at least a first one of the two elements constituted by the head of the bolt and by the nut being suitable for being driven in rotation so as to tighten the bolt, and the spacer being disposed between said first element and the bearing tab beside which said first element is situated, the spacer presenting a first end edge co-operating with said first element and a second end edge co-operating with the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed, the spacer having a first end edge which is substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the spacer and a second end edge which is inclined relative to a perpendicular to said longitudinal direction, thereby defining a portion of maximum length and a portion of minimum length, the length of said spacer increasing from said minimum length to said maximum length in a direction going away from the ring of the collar, the method comprising:

positioning the collar in the non-tightened state around an object, such that the first end edge of the spacer is in contact with said first element over substantially the entire periphery of said first end edge, whereas the second end edge of the spacer is in contact with said second element via said portion maximum length, and the portion of minimum length is apart from said second element; and

tightening the collar such that the bearing tabs move towards each other until said second end edge of the spacer is in contact with second element over substantially the entire periphery of said second edge.

27. (Previously Presented) A clamping collar comprising an open ring, each end of which carries a bearing tab provided with a bore, and tightening means comprising a tightening bolt, a nut, and a spacer, the bolt having a shank that passes through the bores in the bearing tabs and a head situated beside one of the bearing tabs, the nut being situated beside the other bearing tab, and co-operating with the shank of the bolt, at least a first one of the two elements constituted by the head of the bolt and by the nut being suitable for being driven in rotation so as to tighten the bolt, and the spacer being disposed between said first element and the bearing tab beside which said first element is situated, the spacer presenting a first end edge co-operating with said first element and a second end edge co-operating with the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed, the first end edge being substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the spacer while, when the collar is in a tightened state, the second end edge is inclined relative to a perpendicular to said longitudinal direction, an inclination of the second end edge being such that a length of the spacer increases in a direction going away from the ring of the collar, wherein the spacer is deformable over a portion of a periphery thereof, in a length direction thereof, and further wherein, before the collar is tightened, the spacer presents a transverse slot that extends over a portion of the periphery of the spacer situated on a side closer to the ring of the collar and that is suitable for closing up at least in part when the collar is tightened.

28. (Previously Presented) A collar according to claim 23, wherein the bearing tab against which the spacer is disposed has a lip under which the spacer is engaged, and said lip presents at least one rotation-preventing wedging facet which co-operates with a portion of the periphery of the spacer that is not circular.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)